



# Sanitation Pilot One Day Per Week Collection and New 65 Gallon Roll Carts



## Frequently Asked Questions

During the First Quarter of 2014, DeKalb County Sanitation will begin a 3-month Pilot Program to evaluate use of one (1) day per week collection schedule. To accommodate the reduction of collection days, Pilot Participants will be issued 65-gallon roll carts. As part of the pilot, DeKalb Sanitation will test different types of garbage trucks. The Pilot includes 28,000 households along 28 routes that cover 9 areas including portions of Unincorporated DeKalb and portions of the cities of Dunwoody, Brookhaven, Chamblee and Lithonia.

### Key Features of the Pilot

- DeKalb Sanitation will evaluate collecting garbage, recycling and yard trimmings on the same day in separate containers. During the Pilot, collections for all three materials will occur on your current recycling day of the week.
- Each household selected to participate in the Pilot will receive a 65-gallon green roll cart container for garbage collection free of charge. All materials placed in the container must be secured in plastic bags prior to placement in the cart. This will keep garbage from sticking to the inside of the cart.
- Three different types of garbage trucks will be evaluated to determine savings from improved efficiencies, to allow DeKalb to switch to a uniformity of collection containers and to reduce on-the-job injuries of our employees. All three types of trucks tested in this Pilot are currently used by many communities in the Atlanta Region. The three types of garbage trucks in the Pilot are:
  - o Traditional Residential Rear Loader trucks with tippers operated by a 3-person crew;
  - o Low Entry Side Loader Trucks with a cart tipper operated by a 2-person crew; and
  - o Right Side Driver trucks with an automated arm operated by a 1-person crew.

### What is semi-automated and fully automated garbage collection?

Semi-automated collection is a system where garbage containers are emptied using a vehicle mounted mechanical tipper. The collector steps out of a low entry truck and retrieves the container from the location where the resident placed it at the curb. The collector then walks to the tipper which then dumps the container. A fully-automated collection system uses a mechanical arm on a garbage truck. The driver is not intended to exit the cab during collections. Rather, a robotic arm retrieves the cart, dumps the content and returns the cart to its original location. Older established neighborhoods or streets that have parked cars obstruct access of the robotic arm, reducing the effectiveness of these vehicles. When the robotic arm cannot reach the cart, the driver of the truck is required to exit the cab to manually retrieve the cart.

### How does the Sanitation Pilot work?

Residents will be given a 65-gallon green cart. When it is collection day, the customer will wheel their cart to the curb by eight o'clock in the morning. The Sanitation Department will service the cart by 6:30 pm on that day. Once the cart is emptied, the resident is expected to roll the cart back to their storage location. Residents are not allowed to leave roll carts on the street overnight.



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### **What is a tipper?**

A tipper is a mechanical lift operated by hydraulics that is used to empty the cart.

### **What are the benefits of the service changes in the Pilot?**

- Carts minimize litter being created from improperly prepared garbage or cans without a lid;
- Carts minimize trash bags from being torn open by dogs or other animals;
- Carts are less likely to blow over or roll into the street;
- Carts are designed so that the lid cannot be separated from the cart;
- Improved operation efficiencies by reducing the number of collectors needed to collect garbage;
- Reduced injuries to our employees by using tippers to lift the carts and their contents;
- Improved aesthetics of the neighborhoods by reducing the types of garbage carts to just one type of cart;
- Residents will no longer have to purchase containers or carts for their waste; and
- Carts are designed with wheels to improve ease of movement to the street.

### **How will the Pilot reduce worker injuries?**

Hand loading garbage is a difficult job. DeKalb Sanitation's current collection methods require collectors to pick up on average 1,000 32-gallon containers or bags of waste each day. Also, containers and bags often hold hidden sharp objects; insects are attracted to garbage as a potential food source; wet surfaces can cause a collector to slip or fall; heat and cold weather impact health; and inattentive drivers often collide with garbage trucks placing our employees in situations where they may be hurt. Carts and the use of semi or fully-automated collection trucks will significantly reduce exposure to these risks. Preventing workplace injuries keeps employees on the job, and will continue to allow us to provide reasonably-priced waste collection services to our customers.

### **Will the implementation of semi or fully-automated equipment require layoffs?**

No. All Sanitation employees will keep their jobs. However, some job duties may change to reflect other needs within the Sanitation Department. In addition to collecting materials from our commercial and residential customers, Sanitation is tasked with mowing the sides of county and state roadways; coordinates illegal dumping cleanups; assists DeKalb County Parks and Recreation in some maintenance activities; maintains natural areas; and participates in some stream restoration projects. Any reduction in the number of collectors or drivers will be redirected to these efforts which promote beautification throughout the county. Sanitation will continue to encourage employees who are interested in obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), special certifications or other activities that promote more highly skilled employees.

### **Who owns the container and what happens if it is damaged or stolen?**

Containers are the property of DeKalb County Sanitation and are provided to customers as part of the Pilot service. Each container has a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) wafer which identifies the household for which the cart was assigned. Sanitation will repair any damaged lids, wheels or handles. If the container is not repairable, the container will be swapped out with a replacement container. However, it is the responsibility of the customer to keep the inside of the cart clean and free of garbage.



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### **What happens if the Pilot is not successful?**

If the Pilot is not successful, Sanitation will collect the carts.

### **Do I need to bag my garbage?**

Yes. All garbage must be bagged and tied prior to placing inside the containers to keep the container clean, avoid unnecessary odor and litter.

### **Why does the lid on the container need to be closed?**

Lids should remain closed to prevent animals and birds from entering the container and to avoid rain water from accumulating inside the container.

### **Can I use my current garbage cans or cart during the Pilot?**

No. Pilot participants must use the 65-gallon roll cart provided by the county for garbage collection. These containers are authorized by the Board of Commissioners and or municipalities in which our customers live. Garbage will not be collected in any other container or cart.

### **What if my garbage is more than the cart can contain?**

Sanitation prefers you place all garbage inside the container. If the amount of garbage exceeds the size of the cart, Sanitation encourages you to subscribe to our FREE Residential Curbside Recycling Program by calling 404-294-2900. Recycling allows you to divert recyclables from your garbage and the landfill to the 18 gallon recycling bin/bags. DeKalb Sanitation will allow a maximum of one (1) bag of garbage to be placed next to the cart for pick up. Placing excess garbage on the top of the cart will prevent the cart from being tipped/serviced. Also, remember that we will not empty any unauthorized containers or carts for Pilot Participants.

### **Will DeKalb Sanitation still provide a bulky item and appliance pick up service?**

Yes. The supervisors will send out a separate vehicle to collect these items. Contact our Customer Service Division at 404 294-2900 for information on what items are acceptable and to arrange a pick up.

### **Will the service cost more?**

No. This is a pilot program and there is no charge or cost during this program.

### **What do I do with bags for recycling and yard trimmings each week?**

Recycling and yard trimmings are collected on the same day using the same garbage truck. As you do now, continue to prepare recycling and yard trimmings separately. For those in the Pilot, your garbage collection will occur on the same day as your current recycling and yard trimmings. So if you are in the Pilot, simply place your green roll cart on the curb alongside any yard trimmings or recycling ready for collection.

### **What happens at the end of the Pilot?**

At its completion, data collected during the Pilot from operation of the equipment, three monthly customer surveys and one employee survey will be evaluated by a third party vendor. By comparing the Pilot to current Sanitation operations, along with benchmarks of similar sanitation operations, the vendor will evaluate and provide recommendations on how the service should proceed. At the



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completion of this evaluation, this information will be presented to the Board of Commissioners and CEO for consideration.

### **Does the service go back to two day collection after the Pilot?**

The future of Sanitation will be determined by the Board of Commissioners.

### **Do we keep our 65-gallon cart regardless of what happens to the service?**

Only if the pilot is accepted by the customers and the one time per week garbage collection is adopted.

### **Will my rates change with the new equipment?**

No. The Pilot was designed, if eventually implemented throughout the service area, to insure rates do not escalate but are sustainable over a longer period of time. Our last rate hike went into effect on January 1, 2006. Periodically, the program will have to be evaluated including cost. Any decision to increase the cost of garbage collection will be a decision by the Board of Commissioners at which time it may be necessary.